

INTRODUCTION

Injuries are a significant public health problem nationwide and in Utah. The frequency, impact, and costs of injury to individuals and society are enormous, and most can be prevented. An important first step towards developing a comprehensive injury prevention plan begins with collecting and presenting data to help us understand the nature and magnitude of the injury problem. The information in this report helps identify who is at greatest risk of injury in Utah and the characteristics of common injuries.

For the purposes of this report, injuries are defined as any intentional or unintentional injury during the last 12 months that limited a person's usual activities for a day or longer or caused them to seek medical attention. Intentional injuries such as physical violence are included in the survey estimates. For most injuries we can not identify whether they were intentional, however, we believe that the vast majority of the injuries reported to us were unintentional. Injuries resulting from interpersonal violence will be addressed in a separate report.

The estimates in this report are based on the responses to the 1996 Utah Health Status Survey of approximately 6,300 Utah households, including over 20,000 persons. The injury questions were asked of every household in the survey sample, and about every member of the household. This report provides information on injury rates in Utah, the percentage of persons who were injured more than once in the past 12 months, the percentage of persons who received medical attention for their most recent injury, and the causes and places that injuries occurred.

Causes of injuries were provided open-ended by the respondent, and then coded into one of 16 categories by the survey interviewer. For presentation purposes, these 16 categories have been summarized into five general categories: Falls, Lifting, Sports/Leisure Activities, Motor Vehicle Related Injuries, and injuries categorized as Other or Unknown Cause. "Falls" includes falling down, falling off of something, and tripping or twisting an ankle. The category labeled "Lifting" includes lifting objects, and also includes responses such as, "strained back," and "shoveling snow." "Sports/Leisure Activities" refers to organized team sports such as basketball, individual sports such as skiing, and leisure-time activities such as "trampoline," and "jumping across stream." Motor Vehicle Related Injuries include traffic accidents, injuries incurred by pedestrians, as well as those incurred while using a motorized off-road vehicle of some sort. Injuries categorized as "Other Causes" include the questionnaire categories poisoning or overdose, injury caused by animals, watercraft and water injury, near drowning, choking/near suffocation other than drowning, firearms/assault with a firearm, physical violence and fire/flames. It also includes responses that could not be classified, such as "old injury," "clumsiness," and "landscaping." These "other" responses that the interviewer could not classify were recorded verbatim by the survey interviewer and classified by the Department of Health analytic staff where a logical classification was possible. The "Other" category also includes injuries due to unknown causes, where the respondent either said they did not know, or they declined to provide an answer to the question.

The places where the injury occurred were also provided open-ended by the respondent, and then coded into one of 11 categories by the survey interviewer. For presentation purposes, these 11 categories have been summarized using six general categories. Home, Work, Place for Recreation and Sport, Street, School, and Other or Unknown Place. "Home" was one of the 11 original categories. "Work" includes the original questionnaire categories farm, mine/quarry, and workplace and premises other than farm or mine.

“Place for recreation and sport” was an original category on the questionnaire. “Street” was an original category labeled “street/highway.” “School” was a response labeled “school building/grounds.” The “Other” category includes the following responses: public building (other than school), residential institution, other specified place and other unspecified place. The “other” responses were not recorded by the survey interviewers.

The report is organized around the following sections:

- I The **Highlights** section reports general findings of interest or importance.
- II **Reference Tables** provide detailed survey estimates and 95% confidence intervals.
 - A Tables 1 through 5 present Utah’s injury rate by selected demographic and lifestyle characteristics. It also provides information on the percentage of persons who were injured more than once in the past 12 months, and the percentage of persons who received medical attention for their last injury.
 - B Tables 6 through 10B present information on common injury causes and the places where injuries occurred by selected demographic characteristics.
 - C Tables 11A through 11L present injury rates and characteristics for Utah’s 12 local health districts.
 - D Tables 12 through 14 provide information regarding two issues for injury prevention: The use of helmets among Utah’s bicycle-riders and skateboarders/rollerbladers, and the possession and safe storage of guns in Utah.

In addition, a Technical Appendix describes the Health Status Survey data collection and analysis process.

Other Injury-Related Information Sources

The scope of this report is limited to data from the 1996 Utah Health Status Survey. Many injury-related questions were not asked in the survey because they are available from other data sources. The list of selected data sources is provided at the end of this report for those interested in pursuing additional injury-related documents and databases.